correlations between religion and science. For example, on the charge of Boerhaave's reputed Spinozism, Knoeff contends that, while Boerhaave, like Spinoza, wished to separate theology and science, Boerhaave separated the two to serve theology. Thus Boerhaave admired Spinoza's religious toleration and belief in the freedom of the mind (in essence, separating religion and science) but remained a committed Calvinist. Boerhaave's chemistry was intended to expunge it of an erroneous alchemy rooted in a false reading of the Bible. Both his theology and his chemistry are rooted in a desire to explore God's creation. Boerhaave retained occult ideas in his science as indications of the work of God's creation and appreciated Newton because of the comparability between Newton's ether and his own proposed occult qualities.

This book makes an important contribution to the scholarship on Boerhaave by taking the influence of religion on his science very seriously. But the connection is presented as so all-inclusive that, at some points, it is no longer entirely persuasive and seems instead overly and rather narrowly deterministic. Ideas are at times too readily conflated with Calvinism. For example, Boerhaave's appreciation of virtually any other thinkers—Spinoza, Newton, etc.—all become aspects of Calvinism. At one point Knoeff announces, "his ideas might look Cartesian, but they effectively resulted from his Calvinist convictions" (p. 89). If Boerhaave accepts Spinoza's ideas or appreciates Newton, Knoeff subsumes those views under his Calvinism. The notion that the study of God and his creation is a motive for science may well characterize Boerhaave's pursuit of science, but such a quest galvanized early modern figures of many religious persuasions. So too Boerhaave's interest in simplicity and truth in both theology and chemistry might express the early modern exasperation with theological division as much as adherence to a distinctly Calvinist point of view. Knoeff argues that, because Calvinism emphasizes the inability of man to come to knowledge by his own efforts, Boerhaave turned to experimentation. As man could not find truth through reason, experiment is meant "to reveal the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom and power in his creation" (p. 212). Although Knoeff insists that Boerhaave is very indebted to Calvin and while she discusses at great length tenets of Calvinism, she also frequently acknowledges that Boerhaave is not a conventional Calvinist, and thus it is sometimes difficult for the reader to see a clear link between the two. This study makes Boerhaave's religious ideas central to his science and, as a result, adds a significant dimension to our understanding of him and his place in the scientific culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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Andreas Mettenleiter, *Adam Christian Thebesius (1686–1732) und die Entdeckung der Vasa Cordis Minima: Biographie, Textedition, medizinhistorische Würdigung und Rezeptionsgeschichte*, Sudhoffs Archiv, Beiheft 47, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2001, pp. 580, illus. €96.00 (hardback 3-515-07917-3).

This book focuses on a medical dissertation, published in Leiden in 1708, in which the Silesian student Adam Christian Thebesius described his discovery of the "vasa cordis minima", small veins originating in the coronary veins and opening into the cavities of the heart. Somewhat earlier, in 1706, Raymond Vieussens had already described these vessels, but with less precision and he was concerned with their physiological function rather than with their anatomical structure. Until the mid-nineteenth century their existence was contested because often they could not be made visible in wax preparations. Nowadays, the function of these "Thebesian veins" is still a matter of dispute, although they are generally considered to be of minor importance.

The book contains a biography of Thebesius, an edition of both the dissertations of Thebesius and Vieussens with a German translation, a survey of the notions of the heart vessels before the eighteenth century, a description of the reception of Thebesius' discovery and a table which records the main results of

400 publications on these vessels published since 1708. Mettenleiter's text is saturated with scores of biographical and general medico-historical notes and is enlarged by various appendices containing source material on Thebesius, selected English translations and several excerpts of texts mentioned.

It is the author's declared aim to compile and present all the material necessary to enable a discussion of the history of the discovery and of the function of the vasa cordis minima. His book is thus an interesting attempt to write history which is of immediate interest to modern research. The bibliographical records seem to be only of little help for medical scientists who are concerned with numerous methodological and technical details. But they might provide a good take-off point for a case study in the theory and sociology of modern science. As such, a study could focus on a well-defined and controversial research topic which is studied by scientists from various disciplines (physiology, heart surgery, embryology, etc.) which might furnish some new insights into the methods and cultures of medical research—and thus be of interest to the scientists themselves.

Mettenleiter's book could therefore be a first small step towards a study of modern science. Unfortunately, it is also only a small step towards a historical study in its own right. The author confines himself to a description of the notions of various authors from the epic of Gilgamesh to the present time, enriched by the enumeration of countless "facts". He thus reveals a positivistic conception of history which is, for example, visible in his characterization of Vieussens who, as a physiologist, was subject to the errors of his time but who nevertheless was a pioneering anatomist (p. 204). Such seeming contradictions should have encouraged the author to ask the questions which are at the core of modern historical research: how are discoveries integrated into the concepts of their time, why are they accepted or rejected, and which mechanisms within the scientific and other communities control these developments? Whoever would like to study the discovery of the Thebesian veins in such a manner will have to go back to the sources and Mettenleiter's book will be of only limited help.

The first section of the book is devoted to the biography of Thebesius who is portrayed as a representative Silesian physician of his time. We do not, however, know much more about him than about many physicians of the period and therefore have only some general information about his family, studies and medical career; we get to know his few medical publications and poems, but we hear almost nothing about his patients, his professional contacts and his daily life and work as a physician.

It has to be noted that this book is the dissertation of a medical student and therefore should be judged as such and be welcomed as a solid and reliable work that has, despite its shortcomings, a value as a collection and description of material pertaining to a minor discovery in the history of medicine.

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Malcolm Parsons, *Yorkshire and the history of medicine*, York, William Sessions, 2002, pp. viii, 111, illus., £6.50 (+£1.20 p&p UK; +£2.00 p&p overseas), (paperback 1-85072-273-0). Orders to: William Sessions Ltd, Huntington Road, York Y031 9HS, UK.

Yorkshire is known for the bluntness of its sons, as well as for its interest in such sports as cricket and Rugby League football. A county with as many acres as there are words in the Bible, it boasts not only the coalmines and smoke of its industrial heartland, but also the beauty of its north sea coast and the lovely valleys of its northern dales. Less known, perhaps, is its relationship with medicine.

Malcolm Parsons is an erudite neurologist who has spent much of his life in consultant practice in Leeds. In *Yorkshire and the history of medicine*, he describes the many remarkable medical men who either came from Yorkshire or pursued their careers there. Many are familiar figures, John Fothergill the Quaker from Wensleydale, John Coakley Lettsom, his protégé and fellow